

your reaction to that, sir, in light of your recent visit to the Middle East in which you appealed for an increase in output?

**The President.** Yes. I think it's a mistake to have your biggest customer's economy slow down—or your biggest customers' economies slowing down as a result of high energy prices. It's not the only result—our economy is slowing down. I mean, obviously, we've got a housing issue and some credit issues. But no question, the high price of gasoline has hurt economic growth here in the United States. And if I were a member of OPEC, I'd be concerned about high energy prices causing people to buy less energy over time.

And the other thing high energy prices of course does—which is stimulate alternative fuels, which we're doing a lot here in America. We're spending a lot of money on biofuels and ethanols and new ways to make ethanol. So my advice to OPEC—of course they haven't listened to it—but my advice to OPEC is to understand the consequences of high energy prices, and—because I do. And I understand that this is affecting our American citizens. It's making it harder for people to be able to drive, and it's making it tough for families to save.

And so not only is it—high energy prices having an effect on—a macroeffect on our economy; it's affecting a lot of our families, which troubles me as well. And by the way, the higher energy prices stay, the more likely it is countries will quickly diversify. And that's part of our strategy.

You want to call on somebody?

**King Abdullah.** I think one more.

**President Bush.** One more?

**King Abdullah.** Yes—[inaudible].

**President Bush.** Here's a great—ask this lady here; she's good.

### ***Iraqi Refugees/Lebanon/Syria***

**Q.** Thank you, Mr. President. Apart from the Palestinian issue, did you also discuss Lebanon and Iraq and whether there's a common position between you and Jordan regarding the crisis in Lebanon and the situation in Iraq?

**President Bush.** Yes, thank you. We did. His Majesty—and he, of course, can answer as well—but His Majesty made it very clear

to me that stability in Iraq is important for Jordan. He also pointed out something which I knew, but I wasn't exactly sure how it was affecting his country, that there are roughly three-quarters of a million Iraqi citizens who have moved to Jordan. And we talked about a common strategy about how to make sure that those citizens ended up, hopefully, going home to Iraq as the security situation improved, but also, while they're in Jordan, not create terrible issues for the Government.

And of course we talked about Lebanon. We strongly—I strongly support Prime Minister Siniora and the March 14th coalition. I strongly condemn a Syrian interference in the Lebanese political process. It is—I am extremely disappointed that the Syrian leader continues to make it hard for the Siniora Government to succeed, and I really don't appreciate the fact that they've made it hard for this Government to elect a President. We had diplomatic success in the past, when the U.N. Security Council passed a resolution seeing to it that Syria left this young democracy to be able to grow on its own. And now here they are once again interfering inside the politics of this country.

And so, yes, we discussed the subject.

**King Abdullah.** And all I can add to that, on the issue of Lebanon, is how we discussed the role of Arab countries and how we can be effective in supporting the process in Lebanon, so that as quickly as possible a government is formed which will be able them—to take them to the future.

**President Bush.** Thank you all very much. We've got to go have lunch with our wives.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:47 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel; President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority; Prime Minister Fuad Siniora of Lebanon; and President Bashar al-Asad of Syria.

### **Remarks on the Situation in Colombia**

**March 4, 2008**

This morning I spoke to President Uribe of Colombia. He updated me on the situation

in his country, including the continuing assault by narcoterrorists as well as the provocative maneuvers by the regime in Venezuela.

I told the President that America fully supports Colombia's democracy and that we firmly oppose any acts of aggression that could destabilize the region. I told him that America will continue to stand with Colombia as it confronts violence and terror and fights drug traffickers.

President Uribe told me that one of the most important ways America can demonstrate its support for Colombia is by moving forward with a free trade agreement that we negotiated. The free trade agreement will show the Colombian people that democracy and free enterprise lead to a better life. It will help President Uribe counter the radical vision of those who are seeking to undermine democracy and create divisions within our hemisphere.

Our country's message to President Uribe and the people of Colombia is that we stand with our democratic ally. My message to the United States Congress is that this trade agreement is more than a matter of smart economics; it is a matter of national security. If we fail to approve this agreement, we will let down our close ally, we will damage our credibility in the region, and we will embolden the demagogues in our hemisphere.

The President told me that the people across the region are watching to see what the United States will do. So Republicans and Democrats in Congress need to come together and approve this agreement. By acting at this critical moment, we can show the Colombian people and millions across the region that they can count on America to keep its word and that freedom is the surest path to prosperity and peace.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## **Notice—Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Zimbabwe**

*March 4, 2008*

On March 6, 2003, by Executive Order 13288, I declared a national emergency and blocked the property of persons undermining democratic processes or institutions in Zimbabwe, pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701–1706). I took this action to deal with the unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States constituted by the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions. These actions have contributed to the deliberate breakdown in the rule of law in Zimbabwe, politically motivated violence and intimidation, and political and economic instability in the southern African region. On November 22, 2005, I issued Executive Order 13391 to take additional steps with respect to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13288 by ordering the blocking of the property of additional persons undermining democratic processes or institutions in Zimbabwe.

Because the actions and policies of these persons continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States, the national emergency declared on March 6, 2003, and the measures adopted on that date and on November 22, 2005, to deal with that emergency, must continue in effect beyond March 6, 2008. Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing for 1 year the national emergency with respect to the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions.

This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

**George W. Bush**

The White House,  
March 4, 2008.